



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

On Thursday, February 14, Arizona is celebrating its 96th birthday! What better way to commemorate Arizona's Statehood than to journey to one of the many vibrant travel destinations our dynamic state has to offer. From the majestic beauty of the Grand Canyon, to the timeless discoveries of southern Arizona, to the outdoor adventures of eastern Arizona to the vibrant variety of western Arizona, celebrate our state's magnificently diverse culture, heritage and environment.

Visit www.Arizonaguide.com for great ideas on what to see and do around this amazing state.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

AOT's Research Section has been Updated

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site www.azot.gov.

- December 2007 Statewide Lodging
- December 2007 Statewide Lodging by County
- November 2007 Gross Sales and Tourism Taxes
- December 2007 National Park Visitation
- December 2007 Airport Passenger Volume

For additional information or questions, please contact Beth Billings, Research Specialist, at 602-364-3689 or via e-mail at bbillings@azot.gov.

New Tourism Education Development Coordinator Joins AOT

Meghan Dorn has joined the Arizona Office of Tourism as the new Tourism Education Development Coordinator. Previously, Meghan worked for Hilton Hotels Corp as a project coordinator. She is a 2002 graduate of Arizona State University, earning her bachelors degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, emphasizing in Tourism and Communication. Meghan can be reached at 602-634-3708 or via e-mail at mdorn@azot.gov.

AOT's TEAM Grant Guidelines Have Been Posted!

The FY09 TEAM grant guidelines are now available. To download a copy of the guidelines please visit www.azot.gov.

For FY09, AOT is encouraging TEAM applicants to develop strategic and innovative projects by providing a direct incentive of up to \$5,000 (no matching funds required), for projects that incorporate one of the following AOT initiatives: Branding, Arizona Origins or Go Green. Please read the FY09 TEAM Guidelines for specific information regarding eligibility for this new initiative.

FY09 TEAM grant applications must be received at the AOT office no later than 5:00 p.m. **Friday, April 18, 2008.**

FY09 TEAM grant applicants will be required to attend the TEAM workshop scheduled on March 14, 2008. However, for FY09 a new program feature will be offered to communities and organizations that participated and received TEAM funding during FY08. An online test will allow applicants to access and complete an interactive test and become TEAM qualified without attending the workshop. Applicants must receive a score of 75 percent or higher on the test in order to pass. Each applicant will have two opportunities to take and pass the test, if the score of 75 percent is not achieved, the applicant will be required to attend the TEAM workshop. The FY09 TEAM Online Test will be available February 11, 2008 through February 29, 2008. **The online test is only open to FY08 TEAM recipients;** all other TEAM grant applicants must attend the workshop on March 14, 2008. If you have questions or need additional information regarding the FY09 TEAM grant program please contact Glenn Schlottman at 602-364-3727 or gschlottman@azot.gov.

TEAM Workshop

March 14, 2008
10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Tempe Center for the Arts
700 W. Rio Salado Parkway
Tempe, AZ 85281

Great Travel Promotions on Arizonaguide.com

AOT is promoting the passionate side of Arizona on www.Arizonaguide.com, February 1 – February 28, touting the Grand Canyon State as a destination for love and romance. Arizona's fine food, wonderful wines, world-class accommodations, and rejuvenating spas along with our gorgeous sunsets, lush deserts, verdant mountains, and starry skies are at the heart of a perfectly romantic vacation. Destination marketing organizations may post tourism-related "romantic" specials, discounts and packages that are valid from February 1 – February 28, 2008 under the Travel Deals section of www.Arizonaguide.com. Offers could include romantic accommodations packages, tours to romantic areas, a vacation that will rekindle the romance, etc. To participate, select Travel Deals at www.azot.gov and you may submit your offer.

And, as the winter wears on for baseball fans in cold-weather states, a trip to sunny Arizona for Cactus League Spring Training sounds like the perfect vacation. We are calling for all tourism-related Spring Training specials, discounts and packages to be posted on www.Arizonaguide.com under the Travel Deals section. Our seasonal promotion will begin displaying offers from the end of February through the end of March. To submit your offer, select Travel Deals on the left side of www.azot.gov. If you need additional assistance, please contact Marjorie Magnusson at 602-364-3695 or mmagnusson@azot.gov.

Trippin' with AOT

AOT Concludes Sales Mission in Seattle/ Portland Area

Kristy Swanson, Travel Industry Marketing Specialist, joined Kimberly Janes with the City of Chandler on the Seattle/ Portland Area Sales Mission January 27- February 1, 2008. Several sales calls took place at local travel agencies where discussion centered on what's new in Arizona, what's upcoming, and different activity ideas for their traveling clients. Promotional materials were distributed at each office including the new Professional Traveler's Guide for Arizona, the new Chandler Visitor's Guide, SunnyArizona brochures, and the Arizona road map. Additionally, a breakfast educational seminar was conducted at Travel Connection, a wholesaler in Portland, Oregon with nearly 15 travel staff in attendance. In total, 25 agencies were visited with more than 250 travel counselors reached. For more information please contact Kristy Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via e-mail at kswanson@azot.gov.

AOT and Native American Delegation Represents Arizona at Switzerland and Austria Trade Missions

Mary Rittmann, Travel Industry Marketing Director, along with Dawn Melvin, Native American Tourism Development Manager, traveled to Switzerland and Austria to promote Arizona and Tribal tourism at the Visit USA Seminars January 26 – February 2, 2008. AOT was a sponsor of the events earning the agency more visibility with larger booths and longer presentation times. This year, AOT took a Native American delegation to highlight the culture and traditions of the Apache and Navajo Native Americans. Tony Duncan, four-time world-hoop dancing champion and Violet John, also a hoop dancer, represented the Apache tribe. Jocelyn Billy, a former Miss Navajo, presented on Navajo traditional customs and arts. More than 350 travel agents attended

the event in Switzerland, while more than 150 travel agents attended the Austria event. For more information please contact Dawn Melvin at 602-364-3707 or via e-mail at dmelvin@azot.gov.

Arizona Represented at Go West Summit

AOT attended the Go West Summit in Colorado Springs from January 21-24, 2008. Go West is an annual seminar and marketplace for tour operators and Western States regional tourism suppliers. There were an estimated 110 operators from Europe, Latin America and Asia in attendance, in addition to many U.S. based receptive operators. The three-day event comprised of seminars and guest speakers, along with two days of pre-scheduled 15-minute appointments with the tour operators to review both their current and potential Arizona product. For more information or a copy of the report, please contact Hylton Fothergill at 602-364-3706 or via e-mail at hfothergill@azot.gov.

Industry News

International Visits up 17 Percent in November

Despite the nervous hand wringing of the travel industry, international arrivals to the U.S. continue to rise. The Commerce Department reported Friday that 3.9 million international visitors traveled to the U.S. in November, an increase of 17 percent over November 2006. Total visitation for the 11 months of 2007 was up 11 percent from the same period in 2006. International visitors spent \$11.2 billion during the month, up 21 percent from November 2006 and \$111.6 billion year-to-date, up 23 percent from the first 11 months of 2006. While arrivals from Canada and Mexico continue to be the key "drivers" of international visitation, up 30 percent and 10 percent, respectively, in November, overseas arrivals, excluding Canada and Mexico, were up 11 percent in November and 16 percent for the year.

Year-to-date, international arrivals were up 10 percent for the year. Visitation from Western Europe, accounting for 47 percent of overseas arrivals, was up 14 percent in November and 12 percent year-to-date. The travel industry has been lobbying for a tourism marketing campaign partially funded by the federal government to help the U.S. regain lost international tourism market share. (*Special to TA*)

Trends That Will Change the Industry

All signs point to a dynamic and highly competitive travel marketplace in 2008, according to the annual travel industry trend list released Friday by PhoCusWright. Investment from private equity, consolidation among suppliers and new entrants from "Travel 2.0" technology firms will continue to transform the industry, according to the report. Among other trends cited are travel metasearch and the development of mobile travel applications. As global travel companies expand into Europe and Asia, mobile is likely to become an increasingly important differentiator. Mobile ad spending is expected to skyrocket in coming years. PhoCusWright said travel metasearch also looks promising in 2008 due to the twin forces of consolidation and innovation. New entrants such as Farecast and the planned merger of Kayak and Sidestep are likely to provide the increased press and consolidated consumer power that metasearch needs to go mainstream. The end result for travel suppliers will be continued pricing pressure on fares and hotel rates. (www.Mimegasite.com, 2/1; www.ModernAgent.com)